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REPORT OF THE DELEGATE
FROM THE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
TO THE
DOMINION BOARD OF TRADE,
HELD AT OTTAWA, JANUARY, 1879.

HALIFAX, N. S., 15th February, 1879.

THE HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

GENTLEMEN :

Having been appointed your Delegate to represent you at the Annual Meeting of the Dominion Board of Trade, I proceeded to Ottawa, and in the discussion of the various subjects brought before the Board, and especially of those with which I was more particularly entrusted, endeavoured, by every means in my power, to influence the decisions of the Board favourably to your views.

A full report of the proceedings of the Board at its late meeting will, in a few days, be in the hands of the members of the Chamber, and it will be unnecessary for me more than cursorily to refer to such subjects of discussion as are of particular interest to you.

The subjects which I was instructed particularly to bring to the consideration of the Board are as follows :—

- 1st.—The Sugar Duties.
- 2nd.—The Insolvent Act.
- 3rd.—The Stamp Act.
- 4th.—The Winter Port.

5th.—Coal and Iron.

6th.—Customs Regulations on Exports to Bermuda.

7th.—United States Duty on Fish Tins.

SUGAR DUTIES.

Your Delegate moved—

“That this Board is of opinion that, in the tariff on sugar, the aim should be to encourage the direct importation of raw sugars from the places of production, particularly from the West Indies.

“That the duty on all sugars should be ad valorem, with at least five per cent. additional, or *such* additional duty, upon refined sugars as will develop the refining of raw sugars in the Dominion.

“That there should be no duty on packages containing raw sugars imported direct from their place of production.

“That when a bounty is granted upon the exports of sugar from any country, such sugar, when imported unto Canada, should be met by a corresponding countervailing duty.”

It was thought by some members of the Board injudicious to go into particulars, or do more than assert the general principle of encouraging direct importation of raw sugars, and an amendment was moved that all in the original resolution, after the first paragraph, be left out.

Your Delegate felt that it was possible to have a Tariff which might be very favourable to refiners, and still be unfavorable to the foreign (or West India) trade of the Dominion. Specific duties would not encourage direct importation; and as sugar refining, although in itself a most important industry, derives its chief importance from its influence upon our West India trade, your Delegate thought it desirable that the resolution of the Board should indicate such a tariff as, whilst highly favourable to sugar refining, would ensure at same time to the West India trade its due benefit from the operations of the refiner.

Your Delegate could not therefore acquiesce in the amendment, and on the vote being taken, the original motion passed, only four voting against it.

THE INSOLVENT ACT.

A Report from the Special Committee on this subject, appointed at the previous meeting of the Board, was presented. This Report recommended a number of amendments to the existing Act. (Report herewith.)

The adoption of this Report was moved and seconded.

It was moved in amendment, that "in the opinion of the Board, the Insolvent Act should be repealed." As the recommendation of this Chamber was tantamount to a repeal of the Act, your Delegate voted for the amendment.

On the vote being taken, the amendment was lost by a minority of one.

Your Delegate then moved—"That this Board recommend the suspension of the Insolvency Act for five years, and that in the meantime an Act be placed upon the Statute Book, making null and void all preferential assignments and confessions of judgment."

This motion was lost by a minority of one.

(I may here remark that it was shown in debate that the Provincial Assembly, and not the Dominion Parliament, has the right to pass such a law as indicated in the latter part of the above resolution.)

The original motion was then passed by a large majority, your Delegate also voting for it.

THE STAMP ACT.

Your Delegate brought forward a motion, in general terms, in accordance with the view of this Chamber.

It was moved in amendment—"That the Board reëfirm the action, taken at the last meeting, that the law be so amended as to allow either the maker or the endorser to stamp bills or promissory notes, and that in addition to the stamps at present in use, stamped paper be introduced to as large an extent as possible."

Your Delegate withdrew his resolution in favor of the amendment, which then passed unanimously.

THE WINTER PORT.

Your Delegate moved—"That, in the opinion of this Board, it is the duty of the Government to use every effort to make Halifax, via the Intercolonial Railway, the Winter Port of the Dominion for shipping to Europe the produce of the West, as well as for forwarding mails and passengers."

In support of this motion, your Delegate urged—

1st. That the Intercolonial Railway stood in a different position to the country than if it were merely a commercial undertaking. It was one of the principal inducements for Nova Scotia to enter the Confederation, and, without it, Confederation was impossible. Until used in the way indicated in the resolution, it failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was built.

2nd. That the Railway should be operated in the same way as the Canals, not on commercial principles, but for the development of the trade of the country, and for the common good of the people, in the same way as the common highways. Your Delegate argued that, if it was for the good of the country to spend \$15,000,000 additional on the Canals, (which is now being done,) without any hope of direct returns from the outlay, so it was also for the good of the country to spend the public funds, if necessary, in operating the Intercolonial Railway so that the greatest possible benefit might be derived from it. The indirect revenue would in time more than counterbalance any direct loss, and the carrying of through freight to the Atlantic would lead to other profitable business to the Railway.

3rd. That the line of steamers receiving a subsidy from the Dominion should be made the means of initiating this trade. This can be done only by making Halifax the *terminus* of these steamers; and when the term of the present subsidy expires, *that* should be made a condition of its renewal. If the Allan line will not consent to these terms, other lines *will*, as there are many advantages

to be derived from the present arrangement enjoyed by the Allan line. When the business is once established there will be plenty of competition for the ocean freights.

4th. That to ensure that cargoes would be ready for steamers and sailing vessels it would be necessary to have storage accommodation and a grain elevator. These elevators, where they had not already existed, are built everywhere by railroad companies seeking a share in the grain trade. It was also desirable that the terminus should be moved nearer the centre of the city, especially as in the present situation there is some danger of being frozen up.

After considerable discussion the motion passed unanimously.

COAL AND IRON.

A motion favoring a general policy of protection including the products of the mines was passed unanimously.

Mr. Dobson afterwards moved—"That this Board favor the adoption of such a national policy as will secure the home market for our coal, iron, and economic ores, together with the other industries of the country."

It was objected to this motion that a policy which would secure the home market might mean the market even west of Manitoba, and would require a much larger protective duty than would be reasonable; and Mr. Chapman, whilst he explained that he favored a duty on coal, moved an amendment to Mr. Dobson's motion so as to make it read—"As will secure the development of our coal, iron and economic ores, together with the other industries of the country."

This amendment was accepted by Mr. Dobson, instead of his motion, and passed unanimously.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS ON EXPORTS TO BERMUDA.

Your Delegate explained to the Board the effect upon our trade with Bermuda of the present Customs regula-

tions, which forbid the exportation in bond of articles on which the duty does not amount to \$20, and which also refuse a drawback on goods exported to Bermuda on which the duty has been paid here.

Your Delegate moved—"That the Government be requested to make such Customs regulations as regards exporting in bond and drawbacks on the export of duty-paid goods as will enable the trade with Bermuda (or other places) to be prosecuted."

The motion passed unanimously.

Your Delegate also had an interview with the Minister of Customs on this subject, and has every reason to believe that the subject will receive his favorable consideration.

UNITED STATES DUTY ON FISH CANS.

Your Delegate showed to the Board that, whilst a duty was charged in the United States on tins containing fish, thus excluding our lobsters, &c., from their market, the like article is admitted into the Dominion from the United States duty free, and thus Portland, being nearer than Nova Scotia to the markets of the Upper Provinces, retains the supply of these markets. We are thus excluded not only from the United States markets but also from our own.

Your Delegate moved—"That the Board petition the Government to use every effort to have the duty charged in the United States on tins containing fish abolished, and in the event of not succeeding in this, that a corresponding duty be levied on the like article imported into Canada from the United States; and in the meantime that the sanction of Parliament be obtained to such a course."

The motion passed unanimously.

Your Delegate had interviews with the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Finance in respect to above subjects, and discussed fully with the former the

question of the "Winter Port," and with the latter the "Sugar Duties." The subjects discussed received their careful attention, and both gentlemen expressed themselves as desirous, by every means in their power, to forward our interests.

In conclusion, your Delegate desires to record his grateful sense of the great consideration which matters specially of interest to the Lower Provinces received from the Board of Trade. Subjects of importance specially to us received the closest attention, and were discussed with as much care by Delegates from the West as those which more particularly affected themselves. These Annual Meetings of representative Merchants and Manufacturers from all parts of Canada must tend to make all portions of the country better acquainted with each other, and to substitute a national spirit for that spirit of sectionalism which has so long been a source of weakness to the whole Dominion.

Respectfully submitted.

JAS. J. BREMNER.